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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 000830

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/WE AND SCA/A:AVIEHE

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [NATO](#) [AF](#) [BE](#)

SUBJECT: BELGIAN POLICE PREPARING FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR
SENDING 2-4 TRAINERS TO AFGHANISTAN

REF: A. BRUSSELS 625

[1](#)B. KIENE-VIEHE TELCON 6/11/2009

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Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Richard Eason, reason 1.4(b)
) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This telegram contains an action request for SCA-A.
See paragraph 8.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary: The Belgian Federal Police are preparing a report on the feasibility of sending two to four police trainers to Afghanistan. The contribution is likely to be in the framework of EUPOL-Afghanistan. Belgian trainers would most likely focus their instruction on investigation skills, information gathering and organizational issues. Depending on the flexibility offered by EUPOL and security assurances, there may be interest in working in one or more of the regional training centers. The International Cooperation Directorate of the Federal Police recognizes the need to publicize the connection between Belgium's security and the success of operations in Afghanistan. End Summary.

[1](#)3. (C) On June 16, Poloff discussed the need for police training in Afghanistan with two officials of the Belgian Federal Police (BFP), Peter De Buysscher, Director for International Police Cooperation, and Steven De Mey, a Superintendent in the same office. De Buysscher and De Mey have been tasked by the Minister of Interior with preparing a report on feasibility of sending two to four Belgian police officers to Afghanistan. Their report is due in mid-July.

[1](#)4. (C) Poloff reviewed with De Buysscher and De Mey the powerpoint presentation on Police Mentoring Teams discussed by Poloff and SCA/A in ref B telcon. De Buysscher said that it is all but certain that if Belgium sends trainers to Afghanistan, it will be in the context of EUPOL-Afghanistan. However, he recognized and appreciated that there was much useful information in the powerpoint presentation on the structure of the Afghan police and training facilities, as well as skills needed by trainers, that would be useful in preparation of the report he and De Mey are working on. Poloff reviewed the possibilities for training: IPMT's, EUPOL, Gendarmerie training, and the newly authorized NTM-A in NATO, but recognized that EUPOL is likely the most attractive option for Belgium.

[1](#)5. (C) De Buysscher said that the GOB's serious consideration of providing police trainers is consistent with its desire to balance its military contributions to Afghan security with civilian development assistance. He said that given the small number of trainers that Belgium expects to contribute, he wants them to be high-quality individuals. He said that there is significant interest among Belgian police officers in participating in international training missions. However, these missions are not especially career enhancing

once the officers return to their normal duties. He and De Mey would like to make it more rewarding for officers to seek such detail assignments than it is now. Officers are usually assigned for six to eighteen month tours of duty with international missions. De Buysscher noted that Belgium has military detachments in Kandahar, Kunduz and Kabul that could supply security and logistical support to BFP trainers.

¶6. (C) De Buysscher said that he thinks Belgian trainers could be most useful in teaching investigative methods and intelligence-gathering, as well as organizational techniques.

Belgium no longer has a gendarmerie and would not necessarily be a good choice for providing paramilitary training, he said. Poloff speculated that given the overall need for police training in Afghanistan, any contribution will be appreciated. At the same time, he noted the great need for district police training and the role of the regional training centers. He suggested that in view of the limited number of trainers Belgium is considering providing, one way to add value to the district police might be to participate in the regional training center activities. Neither De Buysscher nor Poloff were aware of EUPOL involvement in the regional centers and whether the EUPOL mandate was flexible enough for Belgians to add value in that way. Poloff urged De Buysscher to lobby for flexibility once Belgium is working in EUPOL. De Buysscher asked Poloff to provide information on how CSTC-A and EUPOL interact and cooperate in the field. Poloff agreed to do so, and also promised to facilitate obtaining any information on Afghanistan operations that would be useful to De Buysscher and De Mey in preparing their report.

¶7. (C) Over the weekend of June 12-13, the Belgian newspapers were filled with a report of Belgian soldiers in Afghanistan coming under fire during their training mission in the Kunduz

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OMLT. Parliamentary opponents of Minister of Defense De Crem used the opportunity again to criticize Belgian involvement in Afghanistan. De Buysscher said that security of Belgian troops and eventual police trainers is a concern which is intensified by memories of the massacre of ten Belgian paratroopers in Rwanda in 1994. Most of the criticism of De Crem stems from De Crem's style of communicating with Parliament, which is sometimes limited by concerns about confidentiality. According to De Buysscher, average Belgians are about evenly divided between those who accept the dangers of Belgium's Afghanistan operations and those who view it as too dangerous. De Buysscher is himself well aware of the connection between success in Afghanistan and the national security of Belgium, recalling the Afghanistan training that many terrorist suspects and young Islamist radicals in Belgium have received. He admitted that the government, including the BFP, have not been proactive in publicizing that connection in order to build support for the Afghanistan mission. He said he would work on ways to do so.

¶8. (C) Comment and action request for SCA/A: Post is pleased that there is a growing likelihood that Belgium will provide its first police trainers to Afghanistan in the near future, even if the contingent is small and centered on EUPOL rather than an IPMT or NTM-A. Belgium's involvement, if successful, could be expanded. Post would appreciate any information SCA/A can provide about interaction and cooperation between CSTC-A and EUPOL-Afghanistan, to be shared with the Belgian Federal Police. We would also welcome time spent in Belgium by experts and high-level visitors from Washington or Kabul who could reinforce the importance of the police training mission and provide information based on first-hand experience in Afghanistan.

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